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THURSDAY, MAY 21, 1903.

An Attack Which Failed.

General Wood Uninjured by Defamers and Slanderers.

We are gratified to note the collapse of the campaign of defamation, begun coincidently with his departure from this country, against Brig. Gen. Leonard Wood. Seareely had General Wood started from Boston on his voyage to Manila when a fierce assault on his official and personal integrity was launched by accusers hitherto but cautiously and covertly hostile. General Wood's relations with "Captain Bellairs," the Associated Press' representative in Cuba—in themselves involving neither scandal nor criminality—were made the basis of low and cowardly innuendoes. In General Wood's absence his friendliness to "Bellairs"—easily explicable and pardonable—was grotesquely tortured into a sinister alliance, whose object was the Governor General's aggrandizement at the expense of brother officers and rival colonial administrators.

A moment was chosen for the attack when General Wood was on the Atlantic and President Roosevelt was on his holiday visit to the Yellowstone. The defamers had a clear field—a propitious hour. But American common sense was not to be stampeded by stale and discredited accusations. The campaign of slander fell flat. We are no longer troubled by its noiseless echoes.

In the face of the calumnies heaped on General Wood it is both proper and agreeable to put on record the tribute paid him in San Francisco the other day by President Roosevelt. Of his services in Cuba the President justly said:

He did the kind of governmental work which should be the undying honor of our people forever, and he came home to what? He came home to be thanked by a few, to be attacked by others—not to their credit—and to have as his real reward the sense that, though his work had been done at pecuniary sacrifice to him; that, though the demands upon him had been such as to eat into his private means, yet he had willingly and well done his duty as an American citizen, and reflected honor, fresh honor, upon the uniform of the United States Army.

General Wood's character and record are his own defense. Public confidence in him is too firmly established to be shaken by the inventions and innuendoes of bushwhacking foes.

Forest Protection.

Enormous Fire Losses Which Can and Must Be Avoided.

The average annual loss from forest fires in the United States is estimated by the Bureau of Forestry to be not less than \$25,000,000; and, this year, after an extraordinary dry spring, the loss, it is believed, will involve almost double that amount. Last year, within two weeks, timber and property valued at over \$12,000,000 were destroyed by forest fires in the States of Oregon and Washington alone. This year, the loss from fires in the Adirondack region will certainly reach \$10,000,000. And dispatches received within a day or two indicate that all along the Appalachian range fires are raging to an extent never before known.

When we consider that each family in the United States uses up on an average—this is the statement of the Government's forestry expert—the product of at least fifty acres of forest, and that the uses of wood are constantly increasing—wood pulp and cellulose constituting today alarming drains upon the resources of our forests—it will readily be seen that something must be done, and done promptly, to check the ravages of these fires which, in a majority of cases, are the result of gross negligence and carelessness.

The Bureau of Forestry has recently undertaken a thorough study of the fire problem, hoping to show that the losses incurred can be avoided. The whole country has been divided into districts, and each district assigned to an investigating agent. Local conditions will be observed and recommendations suited to the locality made. At the same time the co-operation of State wardens and railway

protective systems will be invited, in so far, at least, as either or both already exist. The outcome may be a set of valuable suggestions for forest fire legislation, both State and national, adapted to the needs of different localities.

The most important feature of forest protection, however, is the establishment of better methods of forest cutting and forest growing. At present very much the larger part of the tree as cut in the forest goes to waste, and no systematic attempt is made to replace it. The forest industry bids fair to become one of the greatest, if not the greatest, affecting the comfort and welfare of our people. Nearly \$600,000,000 is invested in the mere exploiting of the lumber business; and another \$900,000,000 is employed in manufactures for which the forests furnish the raw material. Surely the extent of these investments, if nothing else, should awaken the legislative mind to the importance of protecting and wisely administering the wealth with which Providence has covered our mountain sides. Or shall future generations be permitted to trace our decay, as some students of history have traced the decay of the races once peopling the plains of western Asia, to a disappearance of the forests?

Some Mixed Logic.

A Well-Meaned But Slightly Obscured Twinkle.

Our twinkling contemporary, the "Evening Star," will pardon us if we should find it difficult to repress a smile over its naive proposition that "irregularities" in the local postoffice can permanently be cured only by the appointment of a Washington man as postmaster. While agreeing with our contemporary as to the desirability of having a resident of the city fill the place of postmaster, we do not think that it is essential for an efficient administration of the office. What is wanted is a man with some backbone, independence, and the ability to say "no;" a man who is no man's man, who has no difficulty in telling right from wrong, whose record in the community in which he lives is unsullied—in short, an honest man. The fact that many of the "irregularities" now coming to light occurred while the office of local postmaster was held down by a Washington man, demonstrates the absurdity of our contemporary's contention.

Now we can agree with the "Star" when it intimates that "irregularities" were encouraged by establishing the headquarters of the local postoffice in the same building with the Postoffice Department. Says our sapient contemporary:

The joint housing of the local and general offices is a type of the unduly close relations which exist between the two in administrative matters, making of the local office a mere annex or bureau of the department, to be manipulated, it would appear from Mr. Tollech's charges, for the payment of political debts and to be used for purposes impossible in any other city postoffice in the country.

If this means anything, it means that "evil associations corrupt good manners." Does our esteemed contemporary wish it to be understood that the presence under its own roof of Mr. Machen's Rural Free Delivery Bureau established "unduly close relations" between the "Star" and the Postoffice Department? Or that that remarkable bureau became a "mere annex" to the "Star," "to be manipulated" for the payment of political debts?" simply because it occupied rooms in the "Star" building? Of course, our contemporary would reject with indignation—and rightly, too—such assumption on the part of the public. Yet it is about as logical as its own reasoning with regard to housing the local postoffice and the Postoffice Department in the same building.

An honest man is honest, and remains honest, wherever he may be, whether his office is incased in marble, granite, or plain brick. And while agreeing, we repeat, with our contemporary when it points out the desirability of having a Washington man for our postmaster, we yet should feel profoundly humiliated if even by innuendo only we were suspected of believing that outside of the District line an honest man to stop the "irregularities" in the postoffice could not be found. We think better of our country, and we should hate to see Washington sink to the level of an Ahaba.

Who is the "Star's" candidate for postmaster, anyway?

Edwin Markham's fine peace poem comes a little late for the African war and a little too early to celebrate the Japanese-Russian one, but no one will repine, in this part of the world certaintly, if it ultimately prove a prophecy.

The seats in a Nebraska theater collapsed during a performance of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." That classic drama has long had a reputation for bringing down the house.

We are indebted to Charles W. Johnson, of Minneapolis, former chief clerk of the United States Senate, for a complete set of the "Official Proceedings of

the Republican National Convention," from 1856 to 1900. Mr. Johnson has served as an official at many of these conventions, and has the authorization of the Republican national committee to compile and publish the record complete to date. The volumes he has issued are a useful and necessary addition to any political library.

The Field of Politics.

Sequel to Cleveland Boom.

The Metcalfe letters form the latest chapter in the Democratic Handbook of Harmony. They follow somewhat as a sequel to the Cleveland boom which suddenly became inflated and arose to such height as to attract wide attention about three weeks ago, but which is now rapidly descending, punctured with the third-term projectile, to say nothing of the injury inflicted upon it by the rocks thrown by good conservative Democrats.

Editor Metcalfe, as the agent of Editor Bryan, singled out Editor Mack and hurled a series of questions at him about party policies, presumably because Editor Mack was quoted as saying something which was construed as favorable to Mr. Cleveland. Mr. Mack should not be charged with advising the Democratic party to renominate the ex-President. He could not do so and be consistent.

A Strong Bryanite.

In the last two Presidential campaigns he was one of the most conspicuous of New York Democrats to oppose the doctrines which Mr. Cleveland stood for, and to advocate those of which Mr. Bryan was and is the exponent.

As national committeeman for New York he worked heroically in behalf of the ticket against great and overwhelming odds, and was loyal when thousands of his fellow-Democrats were deserting. His newspaper, the "Buffalo Times," was the only large paper in western New York which gave its undivided support to the Democratic ticket.

For Mr. Bryan and his friends to suspect him now of having gone over to the enemy is base ingratitude, to say the least. Mr. Mack even declares that he stands ready to support the Chicago and Kansas City platforms should they be adopted by the next national convention. Of course everybody knows they will not be, at least in several important particulars.

What Mr. Mack has done is in the interest of harmony, and that fact should be appreciated. He is willing to make some concessions, and that is what must be done by both sides if the party gets together next year. He suggests a compromise financial plank which, while it might be acceptable to a majority of Democrats who supported Bryan and are now anxious to drop free silver, would scarce meet with the approval of all gold Democrats. It is that Congress be allowed to determine the ratio between gold and silver provided there should occur a shortage of gold which would make it necessary to resort to bimetallism.

Trouble Ahead.

The Metcalfe-Mack correspondence does one thing at any rate. It serves to emphasize the fact that the Democrats are likely to have a great deal more difficulty next year in determining what their platform shall be than in selecting a man to stand upon it.

This problem will rack the brains of the wisest counselors of the party. As the average Democrat is wont to express it, "there is abundance of good Presidential material," but the trouble will be in selecting suitable platform material. Consequently the Democrats would do well to defer for a time the question of candidates and take up the consideration of "paramount issues."

Pennypacker Not Wanted.

The Pennsylvania Republicans are becoming decidedly weary of Governor Pennypacker, and are endeavoring to have him consent to hand in his resignation and accept a position on the supreme bench of the State as soon as a vacancy can be made. But the governor balks, wants to continue as governor, and declares that he is going to do so. During the campaign it was charged that the political ring which was responsible for his nomination was simply using him as a blind, and that he would retire and go upon the bench within a short time after his inauguration. The fact that efforts are being made to induce him to do this proves that the charge was correct.

The governor's action in signing the libel bill is the cause of the present dissatisfaction. It has brought down upon him the animus of both the friends and foes of the administration. Its advocates criticize him for not having signed the bill as soon as it passed the Legislature and came before him, and also for making a statement in defense of his action.

A Republican Measure.

In this connection the forthcoming Republican State convention will have a disagreeable task to perform in treating of this measure. A resolution condemning it is almost certain to be offered, and the problem is how to best smother it without causing trouble. If it goes to the committee on resolutions, of course the organization will kill it, but there is nothing to prevent its being offered as an amendment in open convention. Then, of course, it would be necessary to defeat the resolution as the libel bill is strictly a Republican measure.

In recounting the achievements of the late Legislature, it is probable that the Salus-Grady law will not be one of the measures to which the party will "point with pride," as the late Ben Butler would say. It will doubtless be passed over without mention until some enemy of the act gets the floor to offer a resolution "viewing with alarm" the passage of this obnoxious measure, and then the convention must go on record either as endorsing or opposing the press "muzzler."

It augurs no good for the party, nevertheless the Quay program and ticket will go through all right, and it is quite probable that if the campaign of last fall were to be fought over again with a full knowledge of what has happened those Republicans who are now having so much to say about the libel law would again support Pennypacker and the entire Republican ticket. Such party loyalty and machine loyalty in a Pennsylvania.

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COURTS AND CAPITALS OF THE OLD WORLD.

Baroness Burdett Coutts in Failing Health—Bulk of Her Fortune Will Go to Her Nephew, But Her American Husband Will Be Well Provided For—Heir May Seek to Establish Claim to Long-Dormant Baronies.

Hopes to Be Realized.

Princess Charles of Denmark, youngest daughter of King Edward, and whose childlessness since her marriage seven years ago has been a source of considerable sorrow to herself, to her popular young husband, and to her parents, who had been a scullery maid of the name of Elizabeth Starkie, after losing his first wife, the mother of Sophie Coutts, contracted a second marriage with Miss Harriet Mellon, well-known actress, to whom on dying he bequeathed his entire fortune, making no provision for his daughters or for his grandchildren.

Some time after his demise the widowed Mrs. Coutts, the ex-actress, married the Duke of St. Albans. She seems, however, to have resented the manner in which she was treated by the family of her second husband, and by his kinsfolk, who offended her by the undisguised ridicule and contempt which they manifested for her social solecisms, and for her quaint extravagances of speech. At her death it was found that she had left every penny of the fortune which she had inherited from Tom Coutts, her first husband, to young Angela Burdett, her step-granddaughter, then a girl of twenty-three, who had become a great favorite of hers.

The duchess bequeathed this fortune to Angela Burdett on the understanding that she should assume the name of Coutts in addition to her own, and that in the event of her death without issue it should go to one of her eldest sisters, Clara Burdett, who was likewise unmarried at the time.

Money for a Poet.

It is by virtue of this will of Harriet Duchess of St. Albans that she continues her good works, yet she has withdrawn almost entirely from society and from the public. In fact, she has become so frail that her death cannot be long delayed. At her demise her peerage will become extinct, and while most of her personal belongings and savings will go to her American husband, who is forty years her junior, and upon whom she settled an annuity of \$250,000 per annum on the wedding day, the bulk of her fortune will go to her nephew, the only son of her elder sister, Mrs. Money Coutts, who died a few years ago at the age of ninety-four as the widow of the Rev. James D. Money.

Lady Burdett Coutts' nephew, who is a member of the bar, is by no means in his aunt's good graces, and if he is destined to inherit the bulk of her immense fortune it is altogether independent of her wishes. Lady Burdett Coutts and her elder sister got along pretty well together until the former's marriage in 1881, a union which the elder of the two old women opposed in the most flat-footed manner, subjecting the baroness to such exceedingly plain speaking concerning the affair that the latter never forgave her.

The Burdett Coutts Fortune.

It is an odd story how this colossal fortune came to Lady Burdett Coutts, and why it should have come to her rather than to her elder sisters. Her father was Sir Francis Burdett, the well-known member of parliament for the borough of Westminster, and the last person to be imprisoned in the

Scrapton, Pa., May 21.—Unique in railroads, the new electric line of the Lackawanna and Wyoming Valley Company was opened this morning between Scranton and Pittston.

The construction and development of the road have been conducted with a good deal of secrecy, but the fact that the Westinghouse interests are largely concerned in the project confirms the belief that, in addition to doing a regular passenger and freight traffic, the "Laurel line," as it is known, will serve to demonstrate the superiority of electricity to steam.

Investigation was made, plats of the streets drawn, and estimates of the cost computed. With these before him, the Engineer Commissioner has offered suggestions to meet the difficulties enumerated in the letter of the Acting Secretary. He said the new building had been erected on the surface of the site, about forty feet above the present elevation of the intersection of the streets. The approved grades of the streets would require a cut of sixteen feet at this point to connect with adjoining streets when improved. This condition of grades made it practically impossible for the "Laurel line" to be built.

Colonel Biddle said the best means of approach to the building seemed to be through the roadway of the Naval Museum, from Twenty-third and E Streets, or by the construction of a new roadway from Twenty-fourth and E Streets. The first-named street was paved to the Naval Observatory entrance and Twenty-fourth Street, from E to F, including the intersection of E Street. The estimated cost of grading and paving Twenty-fifth and E Streets, as requested, would be \$50,000, which would have to be carried by a special appropriation. It could not be done until Congress had acted, or before a year from July 1, 1903. The large cost compared with the small comparative benefit would not seem to justify the expenditure at the present time. The requested improvement would, however, be considered in making up the estimates for the next fiscal year.

Colonel Biddle suggested the sending to Mr. Armstrong of the plans and street plans, and the pledging of the Commissioners to assist the Treasury Department all that was possible under the circumstances. Colonel Biddle suggested that Mr. Armstrong should communicate with the Commissioners when any plan of approaches to the building should be determined upon, which the board would aid as far as possible.

KEEN SENSE OF JUSTICE.

WILKES-BARRE, Pa., May 21.—Two farmers drawn on the jury stopped the machinery of the court yesterday. Once anxious about his crops, waited till the clouds rewarded him with rain; the other was detained talking politics in a lawyer's office.

TO WED AMERICAN.

LONDON, May 20.—Lord Monson, honorary attaché to the British embassy at Paris, will shortly marry Mrs. Turnure, daughter of Gen. Roy Stone, of the United States Army.

LOOKING FOR TIMBER FOR THE PLATFORM

Prominent Democrats Discussing Financial Plank.

Two more candidates for the Presidency and a discussion of a probable platform have been injected into the Democratic situation in the last twenty-four hours, while a receptive candidate for the Vice Presidency arrived in the city.

The arrival is Benton McMillin, of Tennessee, former Representative in Congress and governor, who is at the New Willard. The Presidential candidates are Judge Walter Clark, of North Carolina, who is said to have the endorsement of William Jennings Bryan, and Adlai Stevenson, former Vice President of the United States.

The platform controversy has been brought about by an exchange of letters between Norman E. Mack, of Buffalo, a member of the Democratic national executive committee, and Richard L. Metcalfe, an editor of Omaha, who is a close personal friend of Mr. Bryan.

The point at issue in the discussion seems to be if it would not be a good idea to draw up a platform in which the troublesome financial plank be left out. Mr. Metcalfe brought matters to this stage by inquiring of Mr. Mack if such action were taken it would not avoid incurring the displeasure evinced at the last election by the followers of Mr. Cleveland. Mr. Mack is quoted as replying:

"While I have been a firm believer in upholding the principles enunciated in the Chicago and Kansas City platforms, and would support those principles if contained in